

Contact: Paul D. Mehney, US Army PM FCS (BCT), 586-770-3438
Amber M. Theisen, US Army PM FCS (BCT), 586-322-3210

U.S. Army Begins Key Testing for Future Combat Vehicle

Warren MI, 22 July 08 – The U.S. Army's Future Combat Systems program announced today that it will begin strenuous turret testing on the program's Manned Ground Vehicle (MGV) Mounted Combat System. This marks a major milestone in hardware development for the Army's next generation of combat vehicles. Part of the FCS Manned Ground Vehicle family, the Mounted Combat System (MCS) provides tank like capabilities including the ability for Soldiers to engage enemy targets from a greater distance than today's technology allows.

The MCS turret, unlike today's tank turret, is completely automated with a lightweight 120mm cannon, advanced stability controls and an automatic loader capable of loading shells in a matter of seconds. The MCS supports networked fires with precision accuracy and rapidly engages targets with information provided by the FCS network. "By automating the loading feature we were able to reduce the vehicle's crew size from four Soldiers to three and also reduce crew fatigue and human error," said Lieutenant Colonel Robert Hannah, U.S. Army Product Manager for MCS.

The recently prototyped MCS turret, termed a Firing Platform, is beginning system level testing at the U.S. Army Tank Automotive Research, Development and Engineering Center near Detroit, Michigan. The engineering center is home to the Army's only Turret Motion Based Simulator—a device that will put stress and strain on the MCS turret during simulated road conditions.

According to Major Dean Wiley, MGV Test and Evaluation Officer, "Since the MCS Firing Platform is automated there are many components that have never been tested in this fashion before. At TARDEC we are conducting several months of rigorous simulations to reduce risk, improve data, and demonstrate that the several fire control systems and electric gun-turret drive system have reached technological maturity."

The evaluations at TARDEC will be followed by, "a second phase of testing that will be conducted at Aberdeen Test Center (ATC) starting in late 2008. During this phase, the complete Firing Platform will fire live ammunition. This will mark the first time that the complete MCS turret has been put through live fire tests," explained Wiley.

The complete Mounted Combat System vehicle will be prototyped in 2011 and make its battlefield ready debut with the first FCS Brigade Combat Team in 2015.

The U.S. Army Future Combat Systems Program is the cornerstone to Army modernization efforts.